

CALIFORNIA

OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

NURSING AIDES AND ORDERLIES

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INTEREST AREA
MEDICAL OR HEALTH



WHAT DOES A NURSING AIDE DO?

NURSING AIDES carry out the routine work in the general care of patients. They work under the direction of nursing and medical staff. Nursing Aides' duties depend on training, experience, and type of health care facility. They may be known by titles such as nurse aide, nursing assistant, geriatric aide, hospital attendant, or patient care technician. Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) is the term used for those Nursing Aides who have completed state certification requirements to work in skilled nursing facilities, especially those that accept Medicare residents.

Nursing Aides often perform the following tasks:

- Feed patients unable to feed themselves.

- Prepare food trays.
- Bathe, groom, and dress patients.
- Assist patient to walk.
- Turn and re-position bedridden patients to prevent bedsores.
- Measure and record food and liquid intake and output.
- Assist patient to use bedpan and urinal.
- Measure and record vital signs.
- Make beds.
- Store, prepare, and issue dressing packs, treatment trays, and other supplies.
- Observe patients' physical, mental, and emotional conditions and report any change to the nursing or medical staff.

In clinics, public health agencies, and acute care hospitals, Nursing Aides also do the following:

- Help professional staff examine and treat outpatients.
- Process patient documents and schedule appointments.
- Help patients and their families understand instructions given by medically trained staff.

Nursing Aides employed in nursing homes are often the principal caregivers, having far more contact with residents than other staff members. Since some residents may stay in a nursing home for months or even years, Aides develop ongoing relationships with them and interact with them in a positive, caring way.

In patients' homes, Nursing Aides provide nonprofessional nursing care and help with personal hygiene.

Orderlies, sometimes called patient care orderlies or patient escorts, work in acute care hospitals and are trained by the hospital to perform the following tasks:

- Transport patients and equipment to and from wards and departments in hospitals.
- Assist nurses with patients and, if necessary, restrain patients.
- Set up equipment, such as oxygen tents and portable x-ray machines.
- Transport patients to areas such as operating and x-ray rooms.
- Sterilize equipment and supplies.
- Transport bodies to the morgue from nursing areas.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

The following skills, knowledge, and abilities are important for Nursing Aides:

- Service Orientation – Actively looking for ways to help people.
- Social Perceptiveness – Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react the way they do.
- Static Strength – Exerting maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects.
- Active Listening – Listening to what other people are saying and asking suitable questions.
- Customer and Personal Service – Knowing principles and processes for providing customer and personal services.
- Oral Comprehension – Listening to and understanding information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- Oral Expression – Communicating information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Most facilities are well lit, air-conditioned, and have modern equipment. Employers provide or pay for uniforms and supplies. Nursing Aides and Orderlies walk or stand most of the day. They must take precautions to guard against back strain from lifting patients and equipment, exposure to radiation and caustic chemicals, and catching diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis. Using proper safety procedures reduces personal risk. The work is emotionally and physically demanding, but can be satisfying to those who value assisting people in need.

Union Membership

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is the nation's largest and fastest growing health care union.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division:

Estimated number of workers in 1998:	88,500
Estimated number of workers in 2008:	107,900
Projected Growth 1998-2008:	21.9%
Est. openings due to separations by 2008:	13,700
<i>These figures do not include self-employment.</i>	

The 88,500 Nursing Aides working in 1998 will grow by 19,400 newly created Nursing Aide positions between 1998 and 2008. This number, along with the 13,700 separations estimated for that time period, brings the number of estimated job openings to 33,100 or an average of 3,310 openings a year in California. Employers in 34 California counties reported difficulty in finding both experienced and inexperienced qualified Nursing Aides. This data comes from 1997-1999 employer surveys by the California Cooperative Occupational Information System (CCOIS).

Trends

The elderly population, a group with much greater than average health care needs, will grow faster than the total population between 1998 and 2008, increasing the demand for health services, especially for home health care, nursing, and personal care. This ensures continued demand for Nursing Aides to work in the growing number of nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Further increasing the demand for Nursing Aides is the managed health care practice of moving patients from acute care hospitals to skilled nursing facilities as quickly as possible.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

Nursing Aides and Orderlies 2001 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$8.06	to	\$11.08
Average hourly wage	\$9.76		
Average annual wage	\$20,291		

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID.*

A 1996 Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) study showed Nursing Aides in skilled nursing facilities earn 67 percent of what their counterparts make in hospitals.

Hours

Hospitals and nursing homes provide care 24 hours a day so Nursing Aides might work day, evening, or night shifts. They also work on weekends and holidays. Most full-time Aides have a regular shift and work from 32 to 40 hours a week. Part-time schedules are also available.

Benefits

CCOIS surveys in 34 California counties reported that 77 percent of employers offered medical insurance and 67 percent offered sick leave benefits. Benefits for full-time employees also include paid holidays and vacations.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

Nursing Aides training is widely available in community colleges, adult education programs, private vocational schools, and Regional Occupational Programs. To locate local training providers, use California Career & Training Information System (CaCTIS). CaCTIS may be found on the Internet at www.cactis.ca.gov.

Nursing homes and convalescent centers are willing to train mature applicants on the job. Formal training usually lasts one to nine weeks under supervision of a general duty nurse or licensed practical nurse. Nursing Aides may work in a skilled nursing facility for four months from the time they enroll in training before passing the state exam. Those who cannot pass the Certified Nursing Assistant exam within that time cannot work in the field until they pass the exam.

Acute care hospitals require high school graduation and six months to one year of experience.

Training to become a Certified Nursing Assistant consists of 100 hours of clinical practice and 50 hours of classroom instruction. Most government agencies require candidates to pass a written and oral test. Most employers require a medical exam.

Licensing and Certification

Certified Nursing Assistant certification by the Department of Health Services requires the following:

- Applicant must be at least 16 years of age
- Health screening and TB test
- Completion of a minimum of 150 hours of nurse assistant training in a program approved by the Department of Health Services
- Passage of a nurse assistant certification and competency exam
- Criminal background check

Continuing Education

Certified Nursing Assistants must complete 48 hours of in-service training or college courses every two years to renew their license. A one-unit college class equals 15 hours toward the continuing education requirement.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Five industries employ most Nursing Aides: nursing and personal care facilities, hospitals, residential care facilities, temporary agencies, and home health care services. Assisted living facilities are a growing sector of personal care facilities. These facilities house the elderly in a home-like, independent setting and provide care fit to each resident's level of need.

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Assisted Living Facilities, Homes-Residential Care, Nursing Homes, Retirement & Life Care Communities & Homes, Sanitariums, and Hospitals for employers of Nurse Aides. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Nursing Aide is the entry-level job in the nursing field. With additional training and schooling, a Nursing Aide can work in a specialty area such as pediatrics, geriatrics, surgery, medicine, obstetrics, orthopedics, and psychiatry. Many employers encourage advancement by giving training within the facility and offering flexible work schedules to make formal classroom study easier. A nursing career path would be Nurse Aide to Certified Nursing Assistant to Licensed Vocational Nurse to

Registered Nurse. Nursing Aide begins the foundation skills and knowledge that could lead to other health care occupations.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Department of Health Services
Licensing and Certification (Nurse Assistant)
1800 Third Street, Suite 200
P. O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320
(916) 327-2445
www.dhs.ca.gov/Lnc/index.htm

Service Employees International Union
1313 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 898-3200
E-mail: info@seiu.org
www.seiu.org/index.html

Employment Projections by Occupation
www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm

Employment and Wages by Occupation
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioners	No. 29
Psychiatric Technicians	No. 95
Licensed Vocational Nurses	No. 313
Home Health Aides	No. 461

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants 31-1012

O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants 31-012.00

OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants 66008

DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)
Nurse Assistant 355.674-014
Orderly 355.674-018